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Department of Toxic Substances Control

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NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street,
Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Department of Toxic Substances Control
Northern California Permitting and
Corrective Action Branch
8800 Cal Center Drive
Sacramento, CA 95826

Project Title: IT Environmental Liquidating Trust, Benson Ridge Facility – Post-Closure Permit Renewal

Project Location: About 3.5 miles south of Clear Lake;

County: Lake County

Project Description: This project consists of renewing the Benson Ridge Facility (Facility) Post-closure Permit. No physical changes to the site are proposed. The Facility consists of a closed - covered Waste Consolidation Area and Groundwater Evaporation Basin. IT Environmental Liquidating Trust (ITELT) is the current owner. On December 31, 1997, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) issued a Post-closure Permit for the facility which expires ten years from the date of issuance. Under the conditions of the Post-closure Permit, state and federal regulations require that a post-closure plan for a 30 -year period be developed and implemented by the facility. The renewed Post-closure Permit outlines the procedures to fulfill these regulatory requirements which consist of three primary functions: a) continue maintenance of the closure cover, b) continue environmental monitoring; and c) continue maintenance of financial mechanisms to fund the post-closure activities.

Background

Location, Usage, and History

The Facility is located at 7620 State Highway 29, approximately 2.5 miles southeast of Kelseyville in Lake County. The Facility is located about 3 miles southwest of Clear Lake. Of the 137 acres of land owned by ITELT at this location, the waste management area encompassed 25 acres of which 9 acres were utilized for actual disposal operations.

The operations at Benson Ridge facility consisted of a treatment, storage, and disposal facility for Class I and II hazardous wastes from 1979 to 1984. During its operation, the facility utilized three surface impoundments for evaporation of liquid and sludge wastes. Wastes disposed at the facility were primarily liquids and sludge from the geothermal industry and included the following:

- drilling muds
- geothermal condensates and brines
- petroleum fractions
- geothermal power plant wastes from hydrogen sulfide abatement/removal equipment
- geothermal power plant solid wastes from maintenance operations.

The Benson Ridge facility was closed in accordance with the DTSC approved Closure and Post-closure Plans. During closure, the former waste management units were completely excavated and the sludge and sub-soil were deposited in an onsite waste consolidation landfill. A non-hazardous groundwater evaporation basin (Class II surface impoundment) was also constructed to contain and evaporate recovered groundwater. Closure construction was completed in December of 1992. The Facility transitioned to post-closure care and is currently in its second Post-closure Permit term.

Groundwater

Two water bearing zones have been identified beneath the facility, a perched zone and a deep zone. The facility has been in post-closure Detection and Corrective Action Monitoring since December 1992. The perched zone is being monitored under the Corrective Action Monitoring Program, and the deep zone being monitored under the Detection Monitoring Program. The groundwater monitoring network includes nine monitoring wells and four liquid collection-recover points.

Vadose Zone

Vadose zone monitoring is conducted by sampling of four lysimeters that have the potential to collect soil-pore water and perched groundwater. One lysimeter is installed below each of the two Waste Consolidation Area cells and below each of the two surface impoundments. The purpose of the lysimeters is to monitor constituent trends of previously impacted soil and/or perched zone groundwater and potential releases from the Waste Consolidation Units.

Air

The only potential air emissions at the facility are from the evaporation of recovered groundwater in the evaporation basin. The evaporation basin used to manage the recovered groundwater is permitted by the Lake County Air Quality Management District (LCAQMD). Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) have not been detected in the recovered groundwater. Evaporation of the recovered groundwater results in residual deposits in the basin typically consisting of non-hazardous concentrations of sulfate and calcium salts along with minor constituents of boron, sodium, arsenic, barium and other metals. These evaporative residues are periodically removed and transported to an appropriate waste facility for disposal.

Project Activities

To renew the Benson Ridge Post-closure Permit the following tasks were required:

- ITELT prepared a Final Post-closure Permit Application (Application; renewal)
- DTSC reviewed the Application and required changes as part of Notice of Deficiencies
- DTSC prepared a Draft Post-closure Permit
- The Draft Permit received a 30-day public comment period
- Permit approval

The Post-closure Permit includes three main requirements:

1. Regular inspection and maintenance of the cover and drainage systems (with corrective action as necessary);
2. Environmental monitoring, consisting of regular monitoring well inspection, sampling, and data analysis; and,
3. Provisions of financial mechanisms to fund the post-closure activities for 30 years.

State of California – California Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Toxic Substances Control

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Toxic Substances Control

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: IT Environmental Liquidating Trust

Exemption Status: (check one)

☐ Ministerial [PRC, Sec. 21080(b)(1); CCR, Sec. 15268]
☐ Declared Emergency [PRC, Sec. 21080(b)(3); CCR, Sec.15269(a)]
☐ Emergency Project [PRC, Sec. 21080(b)(4); CCR, Sec.15269(b)(c)]
☐ Categorical Exemption: [State type and section number]
☐ Statutory Exemptions: [State code section number]
☒ General Rule [CCR, Sec. 15061(b)(3)]

Exemption Title: Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Section 15061 (b)(3).
With certainty, no possibility of significant environmental effect.

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: This project consists of renewing the Facility's Post-closure Permit. With the exception of periodic cover inspections and minor repairs of cover for drainage, no physical changes to the site are proposed. Control measures that will limit environmental effects to insignificant levels include the following:

- Closure Construction was certified by a registered civil engineer on December 7, 1992.
- Future land use of the Facility is restricted as detailed in the property deed and recorded with the Lake County recorders office on December 1, 1993.
- The closure cover integrity and inspection protocol of the cover was previously approved by DTSC in a Post-closure Permit in 1997.
- The site is secured from unauthorized entry; the main access road is secured by fencing and two locked gates, located at Highway 29 and further up the valley at the permitted boundary. The evaporation basin is further secured by a third gate in the electrified fence surrounding the basin.
- Post-closure activities are carefully regulated to assure against the potential for any additional environmental concerns. Pursuant to DTSC authority, any new discoveries at the Facility will trigger an examination and evaluation of this notice of exemption (NOE) relative to the statutory and regulatory requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Any constituent release will trigger corrective action mechanisms such a Corrective Action Consent Agreement or Unilateral Correction Action Order, as well as evaluation of this NOE for CEQA compliance.

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